

In Support Of New York State Senate Bill S966 –2013 And New York State Assembly Bill A2386-2013 The "Public Assistance Integrity Act" To Prohibit The Sale Or Purchase Of Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco Products Or Lottery Tickets With Public Assistance Benefits

Referred to: The Public Health and Social Services Committee (Chairman Lopez and Legislators Allen, Belfiglio, Litts, and Provenzano)

Chairman of the Public Health and Social Services Committee, Craig V. Lopez, offers the following:

WHEREAS, public assistance is designed to help needy families provide care for their children, promote job preparation and achieve self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, while food stamp benefits help low-income working people, seniors, the disabled and others feed their families, temporary assistance programs, like Family Assistance (FA), which is federally funded through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), provides additional cash assistance to help pay for energy costs, paper products, school supplies and other expenses; and

WHEREAS, cash assistance is increasingly administered to these families through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards and no current state law protects public assistance cash benefits from either being misused to purchase alcoholic beverages, tobacco or lottery tickets or withdrawals from Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) at locations such as liquor stores, casinos or establishments providing adult-oriented entertainment; and

WHEREAS, the Federal government has mandated that each state establish a system of fraud prevention in place by February 2014 and if the state does not act, the Federal government will penalize New York by cutting Federal funding for cash assistance by 5 percent; and

WHEREAS, the Public Assistance Integrity Act amends the Social Services Law, in relation to prohibiting the sale or purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets with public assistance benefits and prohibiting use of or access to such benefits in a casino, liquor store or adult entertainment facility and to amend the State Finance Law, in relation to establishing the public assistance integrity fund to collect fines; and

WHEREAS, the Public Assistance Integrity Act was passed by the NYS Senate in June of 2013 and was not acted on by the NYS Assembly as mandated in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012; now, therefore be it

Resolution No. 83 March 18, 2014

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RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature supports New York State Senate bill S966-2013 and urges the passage of New York State Assembly bill A2386-2013 to protect the taxpayers of Ulster County from fraud and abuse of public assistance and prevent the forfeiture of nearly \$122 million in federal temporary assistance; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall send certified copies of this Resolution to New York State Senators John Bonacic, William Larkin, James Seward, and Cecilia Tkaczyk, and New York State Assembly Members Kevin Cahill, Peter Lopez, Frank Skartados and Claudia Tenney, and to all New York State County Legislature's for their memorialization,

and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Passed Committee: Public Health and Social Services on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE